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DAGGER'S EDGE

IRAQ EDITION: VOLUME 1 ISSUE 11














"The Greatest Brigade Combat Team Ever Formed"





DAGGER'S EDGE

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S-2 Tips OPSEC

Check your pockets for classified thumb drives and documents before you turn in your laundry to KBR!



Picture Credits



(Cover Page) Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, pull guard while on patrol in Iraq. (US Army photo courtesy of Combat Camera)





DAGGER'S EDGE

"It 's All About Winning."

Story by CH (Capt.) Edward Choi


**Chaplain's
Focus on
Faith**

The month of March is the most important month of the year for college basketball - it's "March Madness." Teams from all over the States come face to face for a single elimination tournament, trying to prove to the world that they are winners. As the tournament has only four teams left in the "Final Four," I was thinking about a great college basket-

Louisville, just before winning his 10th National championship.

On the basketball court John Wooden cared about one thing: winning. He used every resource available, pushing his players to their limits and beyond. He did this because the more he won, the more he realized that what was at stake was more than just a championship; it was the future of his players and the impact of those who witnessed the life of John Wooden. Winning changes lives. John Wooden developed the habit of winning by living by a creed given to him by his father Joshua upon his graduation from grammar school.

1. He called it the Seven Creeds to live by:
2. Be true to yourself.
3. Make each day your masterpiece.
4. Help others.
5. Drink deeply from good books, especially the Bible.
6. Make friendship a fine art.
7. Build a shelter against a rainy day.

Pray for guidance and give thanks for your blessings every day.

An infantry warrior once told me, "It's all about winning." The Infantry is not designed merely to survive, to compromise, or do its best; it is designed to win. In warfare there is no substitute for victory. But my Christian mind was skeptical, as I thought it was all about Grace or Love. I was wrong. It is all about winning. The cross of Jesus Christ is the most unlikely victory of all time.

It is all about winning, because winning provides hope and opportunity. Winning may not always involve competition and it may not mean having the best record. We can't win them all, but winning is part of the fabric of life. So today I challenge you to be a winner, as a Soldier, a husband or wife, and father or mother. In tough times like deployments, we must remember that we have each other. The Scriptures describe our heavenly

(Chaplain's Focus on Faith Continued on page 4)



ball coach who was definitely a winner, John Wooden.

In 1948 John Wooden accepted the coaching position at UCLA where he became a coaching legend. He won 665 games in 27 seasons and 10 NCAA titles during his last 12 seasons, including seven in a row from 1967 to 1973. His UCLA teams also had a record winning streak of 88 games, four perfect 30-0 seasons, and won 38 straight games in NCAA Tournaments. In 1967 John Wooden was named Coach of the Year, and in 1972, he received *Sports Illustrated* magazine's "Sportman of the Year" award. Nicknamed "*The Wizard of Westwood*," Coach Wooden surprisingly announced his retirement following the 1975 NCAA semi-final victory against the University of





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**2-12 Cavalry
Thunder Horse**

2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry saves local Citizen

Story by 1st Lt. Nicholas Paolini

2nd Platoon, E Co., 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment happened to be in the right place at the right time on March 18, 2007. While on a routine patrol, Iraqi Army soldiers at a checkpoint stopped the platoon and requested medical aid for a wounded local national.

The local national, in his mid forties, was shot several times, once in the leg and four times in his back. The man received the gunshot wounds from insurgents while returning home. Somehow, the man made his way to the Iraqi checkpoint for assistance. Luckily, the American patrol was near by.


The Platoon leader, 2nd Lt. Mike Daschel, immediately had his platoon take up security positions around the man. The Platoon medic, Spc. Jeremy Duran, provided medical aid.

"It tugs at my heart every time I see innocent civilians hurt," said Daschel.

Duran is no rookie in treating injured local nationals. Since his arrival into Baghdad, Duran has treated several innocent Iraqi citizens who

have been caught up in the violence. Unfortunately, violence is a common practice used by the insurgents to intimidate the populace.


"As soon as I was able to control the bleeding, I knew he would be okay," commented Duran.

The Iraqi Army soldiers manning the checkpoint volunteered to take the man to the hospital for treatment. The Iraqi soldiers were eager to assist the Americans. By all accounts the local national is expected to make a full recovery. 



Spc. Jeremy Duran provides life saving first aid to a wounded local national in southern Ghazaliya. (U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Michael Daschel, 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Reg.)

(Chaplain's Focus on Faith Continued from page 3)

support: "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32). If we look to God for strength and wisdom, he will give us everything we need to overcome our challenges. No matter what you are facing today, know that we are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us; we are winners! 





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**C 101 MI
Cobras**

Barbeque to Relax

Story by 1st Lt. Angel Winstanley

On March 20, the Signals Intelligence Platoon and Headquarters Platoon had a BBQ at the Signals Intelligence Hill on Camp Slayer. Just a couple weeks earlier, the SIGINT Platoon's workspace changed from a crowded trailer to having two trailers to work in. SIGINT Platoon was celebrating and showing their



Spc. Autumn Flenner and 1st Sgt. David Marbut of Company C, 101st Military Intelligence, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., cook hamburgers and hotdogs for the HQ and SIGINT Platoon. (US Army photo by Capt. Angel Winstanley, Co. C, 101st MI, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)

thanks to the HQ Platoon and to a couple of 9th Engineer Soldiers, Pvt. Shaun Green and Pvt. Anthony Alarcon, for the work they completed to get the trailer emplaced. HQ platoon was taking the time to relax from all the hard work they put into the new trailer. They spent hours painting, laying gravel and putting up the concertina wire around the trailer.

The day was filled with boxing, knife throwing, sharing techniques on sword fighting and sharing time with each other along with the delicious food barbequed by 1st Sgt. David Marbut and Spc. Autumn Flenner.

Capt. Jeremiah Pray brought all of his toys, as he calls them, like he usually does with the ACT Soldiers, and he participated in the activities with the HQ and SIGINT Soldiers. Everyone deployed works hard every-day completing the job required of his or her unit. It is always good when Soldiers have the time to relax and that is what the two platoons did that day.

Spc. Brenan Potter and Capt. Pray were the first to box/wrestle. With Spc. Potter's long arms it was easy for him to get all the inner shots to Capt. Pray. Potter was able to defeat an overall four opponents before the activity went to swords. Once the activity changed, Capt. Pray then patiently showed Sgt. Stephane Douge how to de-

(C 101 MI Continued on page 11)



Spc. Brenan Potter and Capt. Jeremiah Pray box during the Company C, 101st Military Intelligence, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., Barbeque. (US Army photo by Capt. Angel Winstanley, Co. C, 101st MI, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)



SPC Rachel Perrin and CPT Jeremiah Pray show their technique of using swords. (US Army photo by 1st Sgt. David Marbut, Co. C, 101st MI, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)





DAGGER'S EDGE


**1-26 Infantry
Blue Spaders**

Security Plan is Starting to Work

Story by 1st Lt. Timothy Evers

With the induction of the new Baghdad Security Plan, the pace has really started to pick up for the Soldiers of Company B, 1st Bn., 77th Armor Regiment, who are attached to 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment. The members of Team Bravo Tank have

been giving their 100% since arriving into Baghdad and the rewards of their hard work are beginning to pay off. The Regulators have detained numerous high-value targets, uncovered an abundance of weapon caches, discovered a mobile sniper platform and have kept the enemy on the defense, all while contributing to rebuilding Baghdad's critical infrastructure. However, with the new changes instilled from the security plan, Soldiers have started detaining high-profile criminals and terrorists almost on a weekly basis, as well as providing legitimate security for the locals in their sector.

One key change initiated by the security plan was the emplacement of Soldiers in close proximity to their area of operations. From this strategy emerged multiple joint security stations (JSS) and combat outposts, which are located within neighborhoods of the Baghdad city limits. With this change, the Regulators have moved homes from Camp Taji, which was nearly an hour away from their sector, to COP Callahan, a combat outpost only a few minutes from operations area Regulator. Operating out of COP Callahan allows the Regulators to provide around the clock presence in their sector, as well provide a quick reaction force for other friendly units in the immediate area. The close proximity to their sector also allows the Soldiers of Bravo Tank to provide security at a nearby joint security station in Ad-

hamiyah, a critical asset for driving future operations.

The Adhamiyah JSS is a fortified compound where US forces and Iraqi Security Forces conduct joint operations and includes some of the Regulator's most experienced NCOs. This task is critical to the security plan because the JSS is the key location for local nationals to safely provide US and Iraqi forces with information leading to insurgent activity. Since the inception of the Adhamiyah JSS and other nearby joint security stations, many local



Staff Sgt. McGillivray goes over a list of high value targets with his vehicle crew. (US Army photo by 1st Lt. Tim Evers, Co. B, 1st Bn., 77th Arm. Reg.)

nationals have delivered tips which have lead to the captures of numerous assailants and weapon caches. The Regulators at the JSS assist in disseminating the flow of intelligence to the rest of Team Bravo Tank, as well as provide force protection for such a critical asset.

The implementation of the Baghdad Security Plan has already had many positive effects on the Regulator's operations. Team Bravo Tank recently

(1-26 Inf. Continued on page 7)





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(1-26 Inf. Continued from page 6)

captured one of the Blue Spader's most wanted terrorist, responsible for supplying and executing some of the deadliest IED strikes in east Baghdad. That was only the beginning of many more great

American and Iraqi Army presence, as well as seeing constant US support and guidance for the Iraqi Security Forces.

"I no longer have to quit my job because the neighborhood is safe now and my family not scared," says Achmed Hassan of Qahira. "There are no more strangers and bad guys in the streets."

The positive effects of the Baghdad Security Plan are not only felt by the Iraqis, but also by coalition forces.. Besides the increased amount of detained terrorists and insurgents, the Regulators have witnessed a significant decrease in the violence in their area of operations. "These past weeks have been exciting and make time fly by," explains Spc. Todd Pitz, 22, from Stockton, CA, from HQ platoon. "It feels good to know that the [insurgents] are now on the defensive and the fact we are making a positive change in



Staff Sgt. Erik Helton pulls security near his vehicle as local teens enjoy a safer environment to hang out. (US Army photo by 1st Lt. Tim Evers, Co. B, 1st Bn., 77th Arm. Reg.)

finds. Since then, the Regulators have captured Al Qaeda operatives responsible for manufacturing car bombs and murdering Shiites, along with other Sunnis who are seen cooperating with American Forces.

"The information flow from the JSS and locals we meet in sector has been amazing," remarked Staff Sgt. Royd Nuckols, 32, of the Hellraisers platoon. "For the past two months, almost every single mission has been intelligence driven."

The reason behind the flow of information can be linked to the constant and large presence of forces in the community. In a recent clearance operation of the Regulators' most notoriously dangerous streets, local nationals were asked how they felt about security. The general consensus was that they felt much safer seeing the influx in

their lives rocks!"

The success of the Baghdad Security Plan, along with the hard work of the Regulators, will result in a decline in activity.

"Many of the big wigs we're going after have fled to other parts of Iraq, or even left Iraq. They know we're looking for them and they're running," says Sgt. David Smith, 25, from Barstow, KY of the Hellraiser platoon.

Although the possibility that new cell leaders may emerge still lingers, the presence of the Regulators makes that very difficult. With the success of the security plan, the Regulators can place more focus on restoring the infrastructure of the communities in Baghdad, and one day hand off a safe and secure environment for the Iraqi people to live. 🇮🇶





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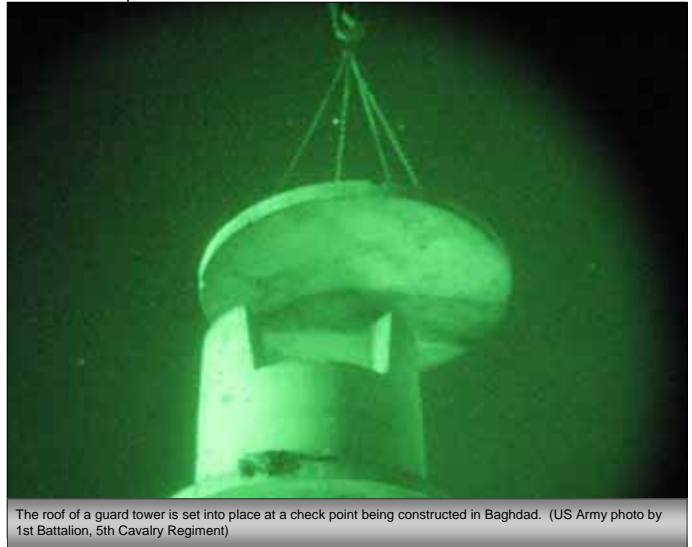
1-5 Cavalry Knights

Check Points - A Vital Necessity

Story by Cpl. John Androski

The end of another long Baghdad day brings violence to an Iraqi Security checkpoint. National Police at check points struggle to avoid the daily RPG and small arms fire from insurgents, which on occasion takes the lives of their comrades and friends. The insurgents try to intimidate the police into not checking vehicular traffic or to just quit. The very fact that they are constantly attacked proves that they are a needed commodity in our battle space.

Check points are vital to the security of Baghdad. Check point construction is a lengthy process that involves extensive planning and coordination. Work is usually done at night in order to ensure safety of the Soldiers and the populace. Barriers are dropped with minimal light to ensure that the Soldiers are not spotted by insurgents. Working during the curfew hours also allows Iraqis to avoid situations where they might appear to be a threat to our patrols. This reduces the



The roof of a guard tower is set into place at a check point being constructed in Baghdad. (US Army photo by 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment)

risk of an unnecessary death and keeps local residents safe.

Checkpoints are constructed of premade concrete barriers for many reasons. They are fast and easy to make and they can be quickly emplaced then repositioned if necessary. The

barriers are usually called by the names of states like Texas, Virginia, Colorado, Jersey, and Alaska. Jersey barriers are the smallest at about three feet tall and nine feet long, these barriers are the most recognizable as they line roads and parking lots. In check point construction Jerseys are used to form the serpentine route leading up to the inspection site. Colorado and Virginia barriers are the medium sized barriers weighing three tons with a height of six feet. Texas barriers are eight inches higher but weigh twice as much as a Virginia or Colorado and are a foot thicker. Texas barriers are preferred to other barriers for the



1st Lt. Orta, from Company E, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment and Pfc. Omar from 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, stand for a picture during the final phase of construction for a check point. The men are holding the remains of a RPG that impacted on the check point tower just hours before. (US Army photo by 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment)

(1-5 CAV Continued on page 11)





DAGGER'S EDGE



1-7 FA First Lightning

In a superb effort to improve the quality of life for citizens of western Baghdad, Soldiers took the time to provide much needed medical ser-

vices to a small farming community. This mission was carried out by Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, Company A, 1st Battalion, 89th Cavalry, elements of Company C, 299th Forward Support Battalion and 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army.

The day began for each unit with link up at various locations around the Victory Base Complex. All were en-route to the farmlands of western Baghdad with medical supplies, food, toys, soccer balls



Sgt. Aquila Mayfield briefs the schedule events for the day to Staff Sgt. Alfred Boateng. (US Army photo taken by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Douglas HHB, 1st Bn 7th Field Artillery, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)

and candy for the kids. Soldiers were well prepared to provide as much relief to the Radwaniyah area as they could muster.

The security element of the mission was led by 3/3-6 Iraqi Army Platoon Leader 1st Lt. Abass and his platoon. 2nd Platoon, Charlie Battery 1-7 FA and 1st Platoon A/1-89 CAV also assisted with security for this operation. Each platoon contributed perimeter security, emplaced checkpoints and conducted roving security patrols throughout the area to provide troop presence and to help protect from any enemy activity.

From a distance the families watched as US and IA Soldiers began to unpack the trucks and move supplies into the facility. Children, always being the brave and the curious, were the first to approach. At first there were just a few and within minutes there was a gathering of fifteen or more basking in the excitement of what was about to happen in their community. Soldiers diligently continued preparations for the event.

Word traveled fast in the area and the residents began to line up in anticipation of receiving medical assistance. In just thirty minutes after arrival, the site

(1-7 FA Continued on page 11)



Spc. Landon Dooley and Spc John Mayhle pose for a photo before they go pick up mail for the Soldiers. (US Army photo taken by Staff Sgt. Alfred Boateng HHB, 1st Bn 7th Field Artillery, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)





DAGGER'S EDGE



9th Engineers Gila

One of the most versatile platoons in Task Force Gila is the Support Platoon in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC). This platoon has the widest assortment of job specialties in the battalion - including ammunition handlers, medics, food workers, and fuelers, as well as engineers. Whenever Task Force Gila needs potholes filled, guard towers set up, walls constructed around the FOB, area defenses strengthened, shelves and storage areas built, or any number of other tasks, they call on the HHC Support Platoon.

Sometimes a mission comes up quickly, as it did just the other night. The task was to fill a large pothole on one of the roads in the area so it could not be used by insurgents to plant IEDs. As soon as they were notified of the mission, the



Spc. Benny Bishop (standing), and Spc. Andrew Horvath (in the turret), both of Headquarters Company, 9th Engineer Battalion, mount a weapon in the turret. (US Army photo by Chaplain (Capt.) Thomas Kirchhoefer, HHC, 9th ENG Bn)

Task Force 9th Engineers: "Jack of All Trades: HHC's Support Platoon"

Story by CH (Capt.) Thomas Kirchhoefer



Spc. Scott Bluett, of Headquarters Company, 9th Engineer Battalion, lays out his equipment for a pre-combat inspection. (US Army photo by Chaplain (Capt.) Thomas Kirchhoefer, HHC, 9th Eng. Bn.)

members of the support platoon made sure they had everything they needed. They loaded up plenty of metal rebar and quick setting concrete. Each Soldier prepared his or her individual equipment and vehicle. The two team leaders, Cpl. Aaron Templet and Cpl. Billy Westbrook inspected all of their Soldiers. Once the Soldiers had their gear checked, they had a short time to get a "to-go" box of food, which they brought back to the motor pool to wait for further details about the mission.

Meanwhile, the platoon leader, 1st Lt. Maya Lowell and the acting platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. William Brown, were preparing the mission briefing. They developed the plan for the mission and worked out the details, as well as planned for any foreseeable problems. They left just after dark, following the Dagger Iron Claw route clearance patrol to the pot-


(9th Engineers Continued on page 15)





DAGGER'S EDGE


(C 101 MI Continued from page 5)

fend himself with a sword. Sgt. Douge absorbed the information quickly and demonstrated his techniques. The group then joined in together to throw knives. Capt. Pray began the match, and finished it also – no one could catch him. Overall, this was a much deserved day to focus on the Soldiers and all they do for the company. 

(1-5 CAV Continued from page 8)


simple fact that the thickness will minimize concrete fragmentation if an IED or a car bomb hits. Alaska barriers are taller and are used to protect areas like watch towers.

Joint planning and construction of a check point are integral in a successful operation. The ISF must feel that it is their checkpoint. Without the proper amount of 'buy-in', the entire concept of the checkpoint is lost. The ISF soldiers must man these locations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These men must know beyond a shadow of a doubt that these walls will protect them.

Check points will continue to be manned for the foreseeable future in Baghdad. They have proven to work, preventing weapons and insurgents from entering an already troubled area requiring security and infrastructure improvement. It is best that check points are constructed at night with joint planning and building with ISF forces. The ISF soldiers need to have confidence that their check point is also a defendable fighting position. With this confidence, the brave men that volunteered for service as Iraqi police or soldiers will continue to prove that check points work but as a consequence will continue to be a target. 

(1-7 FA Continued from page 9)

was operational and patients from the area began to receive medical treatment. The site was set up to receive patients of all types. The 1-7 FA Physician's Assistant, Capt. Chad Cole, along with his team of doctors ensured that rooms were set up to treat all patients; adult males, adult females and children. As patients entered the site, they were greeted by Iraqi Army Soldiers who passed out free dental hygiene products. Once the patients were screened and vital signs were taken, they were escorted to rooms to be examined more closely by doctors for basic medical care or by a dentist for problems with their teeth. In most cases, free medicine was distributed to the patients to treat their specific problems. As the patients exited the area, Iraqi Soldiers were standing by to pass out toys and school supplies to the children. Everyone was pleased with the assistance provided.

The medical assistance visit was a resounding success. Over 265 patients were seen and treated including 65 dental patients of which 20 teeth were pulled by Capt. Jared Dean, a Dentist from Charlie Co. 299th FSB. The operation strengthened the relationships between the people and the Iraqi Army. As the day ended, all involved with the operation were happy that they were able to help the people of this community. 

Finance Tip

1

Saving Deposit Program (SDP) can be done via allotment or visit through the local finance office.





DAGGER'S EDGE


**299th FSB
Lifeline**

Providing Medical Car in Ghazaliyah

Story by Capt. Almee Ruscio

Charlie Company, 299th Forward Support Battalion provided a medic and a dental team to support a 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment Medical Operation (Med Op) on March 25, in a school in southern Ghazaliyah. The operation was part of a larger plan to build trust in neighborhoods affected by recent combat operations.

The mission included medical assets from 2-12 CAV and the 299th FSB, Psyops and the Iraqi Army, as well as a team of interpreters, and a local national news crew. Although the location had been reconnoitered the day prior, the Soldiers were surprised to discover that a supposedly abandoned school house had classes currently in session. They handed out toys and explained why they were



Capt. Jeffrey Phillips examines a boy's teeth as his relatives look on. (US Army photo by Spc. Christopher Lopez, 299th FSB)

there to the concerned parents.

Company D, 2-12 CAV, the unit responsible for the area, teamed up with 4/1/6 IA to provide security and direct the crowd. 2nd Lt. Luis Lozada, a physician's assistant with 2-12CAV, led the medical staff in treating local nationals and prescribing medications as needed.

Pfc. Amanda Manning, a medic from Co. C, 299th, treated women and children throughout the day. Historically, approximately 75% of patients during Med Ops will be women or children, which poses a challenge for line battalions that only have male medics. In an effort to be sensitive to the Arab culture, line battalions often request female medics from Co. C, 299th for these important missions.

Capt. Jeffrey Phillips, the Co. C, 299th dentist, examined teeth of children and adults with help from Spc. Christopher Lopez and Spc. Brandon Wilson, his dental technicians. They advised locals in proper dental hygiene techniques and provided toothbrushes to get

(299th FSB Continued on page 13)



US and Iraqi Army Soldiers arrive at a school in Ghazaliyah. (US Army photo by Spc. Christopher Lopez, 299th FSB)





DAGGER'S EDGE

Weekly Update

Story by Staff Sgt. Denis Cauch


**57th Signal
Dagger's
Voice**

During the past couple of weeks we have remained very busy. 1st Lt. Andrew Mclean and Sgt. David Martin went to FOB Muthana to check on Sgt. James Welch and his team, CPN-74. While they were there they tried bringing in a new system, Tacticomp, to try and supply the JSS's with data capabilities.

Tacticomp is the newest addition to our arsenal of signal equipment. Sgt. Frederick Taylor and Spc. Joshua McDonald are attending classes for the V-Sat. This equip-

ment will increase redundancy within the maintenance sections of the Brigade.

Spc. Bryan Blackburn was selected to go on a convoy with JAG to pass out toys and such to the local children. We have had several more people go on their much needed EML, with more heading out in a few days. Also we had Spc. Michael Clausen from JNN-68 reenlist for his choice of duty station of Fort Carson. The Company has started a soccer team and is playing in a five on five tournament, and they will also be competing in a seven on seven tournament in the near future. In the upcoming weekend we will be cooking out and playing volleyball. It will be fun for all who attend.



Soccer Team from 57th SIG Co. (US Army photo by Staff Sgt. Denis Cauch, 57th Signal Co., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)

(299th FSB Continued from page 12)

them started.

At the end of the four hour mission, Co. C, 299th FSB and 2-12 CAV medical staff had provided care to approximately 300 patients and handed out toys, crayons, stuffed animals, and hygiene necessities to the patients. Addressing minor medical issues for the local populace opens the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, hopefully allaying the fear of those who see American troops in an offensive stance. It is a reminder to all that despite our differences, we are all human.



A Soldier hands a soccer ball to an Iraqi child. (US Army photo by Spc. Christopher Lopez, 299th FSB)



**STAY DAGGER STAY ARMY
ARMY STRONG**





DAGGER'S EDGE

1st Platoon's First Patrol

Story by 1st Lt. Brian Cooke



**2-32 FA
Proud
Americans**

The night of March 10 was a tense one. 1st Platoon, Alpha Battery 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery, was going on its first patrol the next morning, and the air hung thick with a feeling of unease that most of us had not before experienced. We sat wordless throughout the tent; the only sound filling the void was the *snick snick snick* of our rounds as we loaded them into our maga-

zines. Soon though, silence gave way to conversation, stilted at first, mundane in its topics, as we sought to distract ourselves from the next day's mission. We keep our tents free of food to prevent

bugs from entering, yet butterflies flew in and around our stomachs. Someone turned on *Black Hawk Down*, and then the sounds of Hollywood's interpretation of battle echoed throughout the space, at once both comforting us and getting us excited for tomorrow's patrol. We are a generation that has come of age watching the movies of war, and for the last time the big screen was our only preview of the day to come.

We awoke early the next morning, because this is the Army and no morning truly exists unless we rise before the sun. Our vehicles, Humvees with the best armor and electronics the Army can buy, sat in their neat row, ready to be mounted. We installed our crew-served weapons and made our final radio checks, making sure we

could talk to each other first, then the Battery and Battalion operations centers. We donned our Interceptor Ballistic Armor, pulled snug our knee pads and snapped closed our helmets. A few men put a final two drops of oil into their rifles, wanting to be sure that they would work perfectly if called to. We gathered around my truck and I gave the mission brief. A map fixed to the hood of the truck before us, I explained the mission, our goals, objectives, and the routes that would take us from the safety of the FOB to the unknown and back. We talked as a group, making sure that we all understood what would happen, and then the sections split off on their own, Section Chiefs ready to reassure their Soldiers one last time before we rolled. Staff Sergeants Roger Richards, Mark Tutman, and Adam Freeman, all veterans of prior tours to Iraq and Afghanistan, gave their men a few final words of wisdom, relaying to them some of the



1st Lt. Brian Cooke, of Freehold, New York, from Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery, stands with a local Iraqi man during their first patrol in Baghdad. (US Army photo by 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery)

(2-32 FA Continued on page 15)






DAGGER'S EDGE

(2-32 FA Continued from page 14)


lessons they had learned, instructing their Soldiers how to apply these lessons just as soon as we exited the gate. Sgt. Vorenkamp was not an OIF or OEF veteran, but his time in Kosovo was spent with a round locked and loaded in the chamber of his rifle, ready to fire if the situation required it, and he used this experience to mentor his young section. As the Section Chiefs conducted their final inspections, readying men and equipment, Sgt. 1st Class Rickie Jackson and I sat back against one of the trucks, discussing our plan for the patrol. Neither of us has been to combat before, but we were as ready as we were ever going to be. The platoon had been together, in one form or another, for over a year. Seven months of artillery training, a month of full-spectrum combat operations training at the National Training Center, and two weeks of intense urban operations training in Kuwait had all culminated in this moment. It was time to leave the wire.

We returned from our first patrol a little over four hours after we departed. I'm not going to discuss the details of the mission, because they do not really matter. This was our first mission, the first of probably two or three hundred missions, and we'll all have plenty of time to tell our stories when we return to Fort Riley. The details do not matter, but the big picture does. For the first time, 1st Platoon, Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery, had accomplished its mission in combat. Never again could someone call us untested; never again would we be considered strangers to war. The rest of our year in Iraq sits before us, but we know that it is all downhill from here. We twenty-one men were now bonded, and stand ready to accomplish any mission sent our way. 

(9th Engineers Continued from page 10)

hole. The Iron Claw patrol checked the pothole and surrounding area for IEDs before the support platoon began their work.

Support platoon set up security with their vehicles and began working to fill the pothole in the northbound lane. They cleaned out the pothole and placed the metal rebar inside. Then the longest part of the mission began – preparing the concrete in five gallon buckets; fifteen of them in all. Once the fast-drying concrete was ready, it was poured directly into the hole. The concrete hardened in less than 20 minutes. While working at the site, leaders also identified two other craters that needed to be worked on later. They took pictures and sized up this job for a later mission. Finally, the leaders checked and photographed their work, then formed up the convoy to return to Camp Liberty.

The platoon had completed the entire job in less than two hours. When they got back, they cleaned, checked, and put away their equipment. Then they headed off to bed, because tomorrow morning they had to get ready for the mission that was already planned for the next night. The Soldiers of the HHC Support Platoon  truly live up to the 1st Infantry Division motto, "No Mission too Diffi-

Finance Tip

#2

Turn in a copy of DA 31 immediately upon return from leave to ensure timely charging of leave days (R&R or Emergency leave). This will ensure immediate availability of DA 31's during re-integration. (NOTE: Keep a copy of the completed DA 31(with sign in and sign out dates) for your records.





DAGGER'S EDGE

Feeding the Force

Story by 1st Lt. Mike Posillico



**1-325th AIR
Lets Go**

The paratroopers in the Field Feeding Section of Company E, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, may not patrol the streets of Baghdad every night, but their role is essential to battalion operations. The Field Feeding Section is the smallest section in the battalion. Composed of only 15 paratroopers, they are the most dedicated and hardest working Soldiers I have ever seen. Since they left Fort Bragg back in July of 2006, the Field Feeding Section has left their conventional jobs of cooking and serving the troops in a mess hall. Now they take on several new roles supporting the battalion.

During the two deployments since the summer 2006, they have executed tasks such as stocking

Class I supplements, conducting re-supply operations, constructing special sustainment pallets and conducting detainee escort. Many of the Class I supplements that the force consumes on a daily basis consist of water, MREs, muffins, Gatorade, protein shakes and other various snacks. These different food items help to increase the morale and breaks up the monotony of eating MRE's for every meal. In addition to the normal tasks associated with food service, the section also conducts the complicated task of re-supplying the Soldiers on the battlefield by constructing special pallets to distribute supplies. On some missions the FFS paratroopers have acted as detainee escort to free-up the infantry squads so as not to detract from normal operations.

Today, our paratroopers are broken into even smaller sections and embedded all over Kadamiyah. Living at combat outposts, they cook and serve hot meals and provide much needed supplements to their infantry brothers. On FOB Justice, they augment the Task Force Justice cooks; serving meals to a few hundred Dagger Soldiers who eat there daily. At the Muthanna Joint Security Station on FOB Independence, the cooks prepare meals for Company B Paratroopers at the 'Baghdaddy Café'. Although tired and worn out from the long hours of patrolling, everyone welcomes the sites and smells of the café.

Like many other military specialties in the Army, our cooks have adapted their normal duties and responsibilities to continue to support the force in any manner necessary while forward deployed to Baghdad. 🇺🇸



Sgt. Christopher McDowell, from Bridgeport, Conn., Spc. Franklin Blanco, from Miami, Fla., and Pvt. Jonathon Wisniewski from Milwaukee, Wis., sit and eat a meal in at "Baghdaddy's Café" before going back to work at Company B's chow hall on the Muthanna Airfield in Baghdad. (US Army photo by 1st Sgt. Brian Reed, Co. B, 1st Bn., 325th AIR)

S-2 Tips OPSEC

Cell phones are not secure: do not discuss classified or sensitive information unless you are using an SVOIP

Hey Listen up!





DAGGER'S EDGE



TF Vanguard Welcomes TF Black Lion into Southwestern Baghdad"

Story by Capt. Lee Showman

The "Troop Surge" announced by President Bush at the end of January is in full swing here in southwest Baghdad as the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, the Vanguards, welcomed the Black Lions from 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kansas. The Black Lions came into the sector to help the Vanguards secure the 70 square miles of urban and rural terrain of West Rasheed during Operation Fardh Al Qanoon. Throughout the two week relief in place (RIP) operations, Soldiers from 1-18IN assisted in passing on tactics, techniques, and procedures that will help the Black Lions in their efforts across northern west Rasheed. The RIP started with Dragon University, where Soldiers learned about reporting requirements, received IED awareness training from the Task Force Troy Counter-IED Work Group, gained situational awareness through multiple operations and intelligence briefings and were able to speak



A Soldier from A Co., TF 1-28IN examines a possible IED through his ACOG during the transition with TF Vanguard. (US Army photo by Maj. Eric Timmerman, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Reg.)

one on one with their counterparts. Following Dragon University, the Black Lion Soldiers trained on a tactical exercise patrol lane that Soldiers from Company A, 1-18IN set up with the assistance of the counter IED work group. On the



Sgt. 1st Class Gutierrez from A Co., 1-18IN set up the tactical exercise lane at FOB Falcon in preparation for the transition with TF Black Lion. (US Army photo by Maj. Eric Timmerman, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Reg.)

lane, the patrol faced the challenges of filling out patrol packets, conducting normal radio checks and front line trace reports, dealing with an improvised explosive device and conducting casualty evacuation. Following the tactical exercise lanes, the Soldiers left the gate alongside their partners from TF Vanguards and received tactical knowledge while

(1.18 Inf. Continued on page 18)




A gunner from C Co., 1-28IN peers through his binoculars at an IED on the side of route Jackson during a combat patrol. (US Army photo by Maj. Eric Timmerman, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Reg.)





DAGGER'S EDGE

(1-18 Inf. Continued from page 17)

conducting combat operations. The Black Lions assumed the northern part of west Rasheed on Mar. 15, and have been conducting combat operations since their introduction to the operational environment. Task organization has sent A Co., 1-18IN to work with 1-28IN, in exchange for C Co., 1-28IN working with 1-18 IN, ensuring the experience that 1-18IN has in the area will continue to be passed along to the new Soldiers. The assistance, training, and tactical expertise relayed to them by the Van-guards will carry them through the next year of combat operations in the most contentious city in the world. 

Thank You Weston, Connecticut



for all your Support.

Dagger Vision

The Dagger Brigade Combat Team will be trained and ready, fully deployable, disciplined, confident, dedicated and serving selflessly with pride.

We are caring of one another and sensitive to the needs of our Soldiers, family members and DA civilians.

We communicate accurately across the chain of command and work together as a combined arms team of teams.

We are responsible stewards of our Nation's treasure.

We are professionals and ambassadors of our Nation and responsible and respected guests in the Schweinfurt Community, and wherever we find ourselves.

We are flexible, motivated and fully capable of executing any assigned tasks to standard regardless of the challenges.





DAGGER'S EDGE

March Birthdays





DAGGER'S EDGE



1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Soldier stands guard while on patrol in Baghdad, Iraq. (US Army photo by Capt. Matthew Angliss, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)

' THE GREATEST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM EVER FORMED.'

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2nd BCT Command Sergeant

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Sgt. 1st Class Keith Laird

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Sgt. Lance A. Wail



**We are looking for any type of submissions to include:
letters, articles, comic strips or
artwork, and photographs.**

**If you would like a copy of this issue please
contact your Battalion UPAR**

CONTACT US!

HHC, 2BCT, 1ID

ATTN: PAO

Camp Liberty

APO, AE 09344

Travis.Ammons@mnd-b.army.mil

Keith.Laird@mnd-b.army.mil

**This edition can also be found
online at www.2bct.1id.army.mil**

2-12 Cav: 2nd Lt. Nicholas Paolini

1-5 Cav: Capt. Eric Cosper

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